IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A signal conversion apparatus, comprising:

signal conversion means for converting an input signal to a converted signal;

determination means for examining said input signal for detecting additional information added to said input signal and for determining whether or not said additional information indicates a use limitation for said converted input signal; and

use limitation means for disabling said converted signal when said use limitation is copy prohibition or copy limitation indicates that copying of said input signal is prohibited or limited.

2. (currently amended) A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said input signal is a video signal, and said signal conversion means is adapted to perform a signal conversion process on said video signal selected from the group consisting of converting progressive scanning into interlaced scanning and converting interlaced scanning into progressive scanning.

3. (currently amended) A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said input signal is a video signal, and said signal conversion means is adapted to convert the number of scanning lines of said video signal.

4. (currently amended) A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said input signal is a video signal, and said signal conversion means is adapted to convert a signal format of said video signal.

5. (currently amended) A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said signal ~~conversion means is adapted for perform a signal~~ format conversion is selected from the group consisting of converting a high-definition television signal into a standard television signal and converting a standard television signal into a high-definition television signal.

6. (currently amended) A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said signal ~~conversion means is adapted to perform a signal~~ format conversion is selected from the group consisting of converting a video signal of ~~an~~ image data in a format for computer processing into a high-definition television signal, converting a video signal of image data in a format for computer processing into ~~or~~ a standard television signal~~;~~, ~~and~~ converting a high-definition television signal into a video signal of image data in a format for computer processing, and converting ~~or~~ a standard television signal into a video signal of ~~an~~ image data in a format for computer processing.

7. (currently amended) A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said video signal is an analog video signal and said signal conversion means is adapted to convert said ~~signal format from an~~ analog video signal into a digital video signal.

8. (currently amended) A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said signal conversion means is adapted to convert a data compression method of said video signal.

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9.   (original)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said input signal is an audio signal.

10.   (original)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said signal conversion means is adapted to convert a sampling frequency of said audio signal.

11.   (original)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said signal conversion means is adapted to convert a data compression method for said audio signal.

12.   (currently amended) A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said audio signal is an analog audio signal and said signal conversion means is adapted to convert an said analog audio signal into a digital audio signal.

13.   (currently amended) A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising notification means for notifying a user of said use limitation for said converted signal.

14.   (currently amended) A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said additional information is digital watermark information, and said determination means detects said digital watermark information and determines whether or not said digital watermark information indicates copy prohibition or copy limitation that copying of said input signal is prohibited or limited.

15.   (original)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said input signal is a digital signal.

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16. (currently amended) A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said additional information comprises a plurality of different types of ~~additional pieces of~~ information ~~are added to said input signal~~, and when said determination means determines that any one of said plurality of different types of ~~additional pieces of~~ information indicates ~~copy prohibition or copy limitation~~ that copying of said input signal is prohibited or limited, said use limitation means disables said converted signal.

17. (currently amended) A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 16, wherein one of said plurality of different types of ~~additional pieces of~~ information is digital watermark information.

18. (currently amended) A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said input signal is a digital signal that is encrypted ~~provided after an encryption process is performed thereon~~.

19. (currently amended) A signal conversion method, comprising the steps of:
converting an input signal to a converted signal;
examining said input signal for ~~detecting~~ additional information added to said input signal~~,~~; ~~and~~
determining whether or not said additional information indicates a use limitation for said ~~converted~~ input signal; and
disabling said converted signal when said use limitation ~~is copy prohibition or copy limitation~~ indicates that copying of said input signal is prohibited or limited.

20. (currently amended) A signal conversion method according to claim 19, wherein said input signal is a video

signal, and said signal ~~conversion~~ converting step performs a signal conversion process on said video signal selected from the group consisting of converting progressive scanning into interlaced scanning and converting interlaced scanning into progressive scanning.

21. (currently amended) A signal conversion method according to claim 19, wherein said input signal is a video signal, and said signal ~~conversion~~ converting step converts the number of scanning lines of said video signal.

22. (currently amended) A signal conversion method according to claim 19, wherein said input signal is a video signal, and said signal ~~conversion~~ converting step converts a signal format of said video signal.

23. (currently amended) A signal conversion method according to claim 22, wherein said signal ~~conversion step performs a signal~~ format conversion is selected from the group consisting of converting a high-definition television signal into a standard television signal and converting a standard television signal into a high-definition television signal.

24. (currently amended) A signal conversion method according to claim 22, wherein said signal ~~conversion step performs a signal~~ format conversion is selected from the group consisting of converting a video signal of ~~an~~ image data in a format for computer processing into a high-definition television signal, converting a video signal of image data in a format for computer processing into ~~or~~ a standard television signal~~,~~, and converting a high-definition television signal into a video signal of image data in a format for computer processing, and

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converting ~~or~~ a standard television signal into a video signal of ~~an~~ image data in a format for computer processing.

25. (currently amended) A signal conversion method according to claim 22, wherein said video signal is an analog video signal and said signal ~~conversion~~ converting step converts said ~~signal format from an~~ analog video signal into a digital video signal.

26. (currently amended) A signal conversion method according to claim 22, wherein said signal ~~conversion~~ converting step converts a data compression method of said video signal.

27. (original) A signal conversion method according to claim 19, wherein said input signal is an audio signal.

28. (currently amended) A signal conversion method according to claim 27, wherein said signal ~~conversion~~ converting step converts a sampling frequency of said audio signal.

29. (currently amended) A signal conversion method according to claim 27, wherein said signal ~~conversion~~ converting step converts a data compression method for said audio signal.

30. (currently amended) A signal conversion method according to claim 27, wherein said audio signal is an analog audio signal and said signal ~~conversion~~ converting step converts ~~an~~ said analog audio signal into a digital audio signal.

31. (currently amended) A signal conversion method according to claim 19, further comprising ~~a notification step for~~ notifying a user of said use limitation for said converted signal.

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32. (currently amended) A signal conversion method according to claim 19, wherein said additional information is digital watermark information, ~~and~~ said examining ~~detecting~~ step detects said digital watermark information and said determining step determines whether or not said digital watermark information indicates ~~copy prohibition or copy limitation~~ that copying of said input signal is prohibited or limited.

33. (original) A signal conversion method according to claim 19, wherein said input signal is a digital signal.

34. (currently amended) A signal conversion method according to claim 19, wherein said additional information comprises a plurality of different types of ~~additional pieces of~~ information ~~are added to said input signal~~, and said ~~detecting~~ disabling step disables said converted signal when said examining and determining steps detect and determine that any one of said plurality of different types of ~~additional pieces of~~ information indicates ~~copy prohibition or copy limitation~~ that copying of said input signal is prohibited or limited.

35. (currently amended) A signal conversion method according to claim 34, wherein one of said plurality of different types of ~~additional pieces of~~ information is digital watermark information.

36. (currently amended) A signal conversion method according to claim 19, wherein said input signal is a digital signal that is encrypted ~~provided after an encryption process is performed thereon~~.

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37.   (new)   A signal conversion apparatus, comprising:

a signal converter adapted to convert an input signal into a converted signal;

a signal detector adapted to examine said input signal, detect additional information added to said input signal and determine whether said additional information indicates a use limitation for said input signal; and

a switch for disabling said converted signal when said use limitation indicates that copying of said input signal is prohibited or limited.

38.   (new)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 37, wherein said input signal is a video signal, and said signal converter is adapted to perform a signal conversion process on said video signal selected from the group consisting of converting progressive scanning into interlaced scanning and converting interlaced scanning into progressive scanning.

39.   (new)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 37, wherein said input signal is a video signal, and said signal converter is adapted to convert the number of scanning lines of said video signal.

40.   (new)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 37, wherein said input signal is a video signal, and said signal converter is adapted to convert a signal format of said video signal.

41.   (new)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 40, wherein said signal format conversion is selected from the group consisting of converting a high-definition television signal into a standard television signal and converting a

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standard television signal into a high-definition television signal.

42. (new)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 40, wherein said signal format conversion is selected from the group consisting of converting a video signal of image data in a format for computer processing into a high-definition television signal, converting a video signal of image data in a format for computer processing into a standard television signal, converting a high-definition television signal into a video signal of image data in a format for computer processing, and converting a standard television signal into a video signal of image data in a format for computer processing.

43. (new)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 40, wherein said video signal is an analog video signal and said signal converter is adapted to convert said analog video signal into a digital video signal.

44. (new)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 40, wherein said signal converter is adapted to convert a data compression method of said video signal.

45. (new)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 37, wherein said input signal is an audio signal.

46. (new)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 45, wherein said signal converter is adapted to convert a sampling frequency of said audio signal.

47. (new)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 45, wherein said signal converter is adapted to convert a data compression method for said audio signal.

48. (new)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 45, wherein said audio signal is an analog audio signal and said signal converter is adapted to convert said analog audio signal into a digital audio signal.

49. (new)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 37, further comprising a visual indicator adapted to notify a user of said use limitation for said converted signal.

50. (new)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 37, wherein said additional information is digital watermark information, and said signal detector is adapted to detect said digital watermark information and determine whether said digital watermark information indicates that copying of said input signal is prohibited or limited.

51. (new)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 37, wherein said input signal is a digital signal.

52. (new)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 37, wherein said additional information comprises a plurality of different types of information, said detector is adapted to determine when any one of said plurality of different types of information indicates that copying of said input signal is prohibited or limited, and said switch is adapted to disable said converted signal when any one of said plurality of different types of information indicates that copying of said input signal is prohibited or limited.

53. (new)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 52, wherein one of said plurality of different types of information is digital watermark information.

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54. (new)   A signal conversion apparatus according to claim 37, wherein said input signal is a digital signal that is encrypted.